

Bush signs bill to create national Indian museum

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President George Bush signed legislation recently that establishes the National Museum of the American Indian as a new Smithsonian Institution museum.

Scheduled to open in the mid- to late 1990s, the museum will be located on the National Mall on a site between the National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol. It will be the 15th museum in the Smithsonian complex.

The legislation calls for the establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian as a living memorial dedicated to the collection, preservation, study and exhibition of American Indian languages, literature, history, art and culture.

The centerpiece of the new museum will be the collection of more than one million artifacts in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, now in New York City. This collection, which includes a library, photo archives and other resource materials, will be transferred to the Smithsonian Institution.

The legislation also describes the Smithsonian's policy on the repatriation of American Indian human remains and associated funerary objects. The legislation directs the secretary of the Smithsonian, in consultation and cooperation with traditional Indian religious leaders and government officials of Indian tribes, to conduct a detailed inventory of the 18,650 North American Indian human remains and associated funerary objects in the Smithsonian's collections.

The inventory is to be integrated with the best available scientific and historical documentation to identify the origins of such remains and objects and to notify the appropriate tribe of that identification.

The bill authorizes \$1 million to be appropriated for fiscal year 1991 to carry out the inventory, with subsequent amounts to be appropriated in future years.